

**TOWN OF ARLINGTON**  
**TOWN MEETING ELECTRONIC VOTING STUDY COMMITTEE**

*April 17, 2013*

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Town Meeting Electronic Voting Study Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Eric Helmuth in the Second Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall Annex on Wednesday, April 17, 2013, at 7:30 PM.

*Quorum*

A quorum was present: Wes Beal, Steve Storch, Adam Auster, and Eric Helmuth.

**Approval of Minutes**

MOTION:  
*Correction  
of Minutes*

Mr. Auster moved to amend the draft minutes of the April 3, 2013, meeting by removing Raymond Charbonneau's name from the list of those present on page 1.

The motion passed.

MOTION:  
*Approval  
of Minutes*

Mr. Storch moved to accept the minutes of the April 3, 2013, meeting as amended.

The motion passed.

**New Business**

DISCUSSION:  
*Committee  
Presentations*

Committee Chair Eric Helmuth said that he would have the following three opportunities to present the Committee's work to Town Meeting: (1) Article 3, committee reports; Article 12, bylaw amendment; and Article 42, appropriation.

The Committee discussed elements of these presentations.

Mr. Helmuth said he planned to show videos of votes taken with electronic handsets at other town meetings as part of his Article 3 presentation.

The Committee discussed issues that Town Meeting members might raise or be concerned about during consideration of the motions under Articles 12 and 42.

This discussion followed closely a list of such anticipated issues that was distributed by Mr. Helmuth. A copy of this list is appended to these minutes.

Committee members discussed the possibility of asking Town Meeting for a temporary or definite postponement of the bylaw proposal under Article 12 if, in the course of debate, an aspect of the proposal provoked considerable concern that could be met by amending the proposal.

The Committee discussed a scenario in which Mr. Helmuth or another Town Meeting member could make a motion to postpone, or to commit the article to an ad-hoc committee, to allow time to draft such an amendment and provide it to Town meeting members in advance of the final vote.

MOTION:  
*Future Meetings*

Mr. Auster moved to suspend future meetings until the call of the Committee Chair.

MOTION:  
*Adjournment*

Mr. Beal moved that the meeting adjourn.

The motion passed.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Adam Auster, *Secretary*

### **Corrections**

The two references to Town Meeting Warrant “Article 2” on page 1 are corrected to read “Article 3.”

**APPROVED**  
as corrected  
August 14, 2013

Adam Auster, *Secretary*

Eric Helmuth, *Chair*

Documents attached to these minutes:

1. “Anticipated Question and Objections on E-Voting.”

## Anticipated questions and objections on E-voting

*Which of these should we pre-empt in the presentations, and which should not be mentioned unless someone asks the question? Which of these are we likely to get the opportunity to directly answer vs. not?*

1. Can we rent to own? It seems a waste to spend \$10k renting a \$29k system
2. Why didn't you fully explore the security provisions available under the NDA – algorithms, etc?
3. Why can't we just use smartphones to vote, make our own app, etc?
4. This will politicize TM too much and result in TMM getting hammered by constituents. A lot of TMM didn't sign up for this, and it will drive people away from wanting to serve in TM. We have enough problems getting enough people to serve in TM now.
5. The Moderator is being given too much discretion in how this works, what if he or she doesn't exercise good judgment and loses the trust of the meeting?
6. We will lose the feel and culture of the standing vote, and the benefit of seeing how people you respect are voting. That is important to a lot of people.
7. There is too much technology in life already, and the benefits are modest; the old way of doing things for the past 200 years works just fine.
8. Are you sure the annual costs are really that low? If the costs are really just \$2500 for buying a system, why is renting one with a vendor staff person so much more expensive?
9. We are responding to a manufactured need that we ourselves created to embellish the job we already perform well without it. It's for us, not for our constituents. We are already open – we publish our email addresses and phone numbers for constituents to contact us; TM is open to the public; we televise meetings; I've never heard constituents complain about accountability or ask for my voting record. What we do now is plenty.
10. Don't buy it now, it's too expensive. It's fine to amend the bylaws to permit evoting, but right now the cost is too much for the marginal improvements; if we asked most constituents if we should spend \$40k in order to track our votes, most would say no. We should wait until the technology is cheaper. This is a want, not a need.
11. This would place another electronic barrier between we and our constituents. An electronic voting record doesn't tell the story – a box score is not the story of the game. Procedural votes on amendments, substitutes, etc can be misleading.